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Plan Overview and Purpose

The State Route 85 Corridor planning area has been experiencing steady growth during the last 20 years. This growth has largely been due to an accelerated rate of annexation and development as the Town of Buckeye has added to its incorporated area. For example, in the 1970s, the Town of Buckeye annexed approximately 700 acres of land; in the 1980s, about 8,000 acres; and in the 1990s, approximately 16,500 acres were annexed, excluding Sun Valley north of I-10 and the Southwest Regional Landfill site, south of the town limits. The Town of Buckeye plans to continue incorporating land within its municipal planning area and projects a future population of 500,000 residents who will generally live within master planned communities. This could result in a population increase in incorporated areas in the State Route 85 Corridor planning area of approximately 100,000 residents in the future.

As development expands within the Town of Buckeye and along State Route 85, it is important to plan for expansion of infrastructure and services, public recreation areas to benefit all residents (including a public trails system), a water supply that is adequate both in quality and quantity, protection of historic and cultural resources, and preservation of endangered and sensitive plant and animal species and habitat. Therefore, the State Route 85 Corridor Area Plan was completed to reflect current conditions and to accommodate a portion of the anticipated growth in a manner that is consistent with protecting public health, safety, convenience, and general welfare. In addition to elements examining Land Use, Transportation, Environment, and Economic Development, this Area Plan includes Environmental Effects, Growth Areas, Open Space, Water Resources, and Cost of Development elements as required by the Growing Smarter Act of 1998 and the Growing Smarter Plus Act of 2000.

Public Participation

The State Route 85 Corridor Area Plan emphasizes public involvement and incorporates citizen and stakeholder comments, ideas, and recommendations. During preparation of *Eye to the Future 2020*, the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan, area residents helped develop a vision for the southwestern planning area that includes economic development to enhance the tax base and provide goods, services, and jobs to community residents; enjoyment of a high quality of life, community identity, and neighborhood atmosphere; and growth in harmony with the environment, with preservation of precious resources and natural river corridors. This vision includes promotion of sustainable communities where people live, work, and play, with preservation of rural lifestyles and retention of agricultural land. Current issues and concerns identified by State Route 85 Corridor planning area residents correspond to this vision. Concerns mentioned most often by citizens and



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stakeholders include maintaining the rural character of the planning area outside the towns of Buckeye and Gila Bend; focusing development close to the towns; completion of improvements on State Route 85; and preservation of sensitive species and natural habitat in the planning area.

Conclusion

The State Route 85 Corridor Area Plan prepares for and accommodates growth over the next ten to twenty years. It will be reexamined and updated periodically to reflect current conditions and changes.

Area Plan Elements

This Area Plan contains a series of goals, objectives, and policies used to define development standards, guide public investment, and guide public and private decision-making.

Land Use

The land use element discusses general land use, development, and future land use. Efforts are directed at encouraging efficient and timely growth patterns.

Goal L1:

Promote efficient land development that is compatible with adjacent land uses, is well integrated with the transportation system, and is sensitive to the natural environment.

Objective L1.1: Encourage the timely and orderly expansion of Urban Service Area.

Objective L1.2: Encourage the use of planned communities that provide a variety of land uses, housing types, employment opportunities, and offer a safe and pleasant living and working environment.

Objective L1.3: Encourage high quality commercial centers and well-designed office, business, and industrial parks that are properly located proximate to populated areas.

Goal L2:

Define future policies for area immediately adjacent to State Route 85.

Objective L2.1: Encourage development that is compatible with existing and future freeways, as well as other prominent land use features within the area immediately adjacent to State Route 85.



Transportation

The transportation element defines a system of transportation facilities and services, including existing and future roads, transit possibilities, and system limitations. Efforts are directed at maximizing transportation system efficiency by coordinating land use and transportation planning.

Goal T1:

Improve the roadway network to meet future transportation needs, promote safety, and mitigate congestion.

Objective T1.1: Determine the preferred location of new roadway connections and extensions for the next 20 years.

Objective T1.2: Minimize traffic congestion on regional routes, state highways, and urban arterial roads.

Objective T1.3: Encourage the coordinated and timely development of new roadways.

Objective T1.4: Provide alternatives to mitigate conflicts between commercial trucking and the interests of planning area residents.

Environment/Environmental Effects

The environment/environmental effects element focuses on maintaining and improving the physical environment, conserving natural resources, and other environmental considerations. Efforts include protecting the region's air, water, land, and cultural resources.

Goal E1:

Promote development that mitigates adverse environmental impacts on the natural and cultural environment and preserves highly valued open space.

Objective E1.1: Encourage developments that successfully coexist and are compatible with significant natural features.

Objective E1.2: Preserve significant natural and cultural resources.

Objective E1.3: Preserve significant existing open space and habitat areas for wildlife and desert plant species.

Objective E1.4: Support adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation that are sensitive to the environment.



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Economic Development

The economic development element focuses on creating a healthy economy in the planning area that increases living standards and quality of life.

Goal ED1:

Promote a growing, balanced, efficient, and diversified economy, consistent with available resources, that enhances quality employment opportunities, improves quality of life, and is sensitive to the natural and cultural environment.

Objective ED1.1: Expand quality employment opportunities by supporting efforts that encourage business formation and expansion.

Objective ED1.2: Help increase the jobs-to-residents ratio.

Objective ED1.3: Encourage a wide range of commercial activities at the intersections of roads of regional significance and where roads of regional significance intersect major freeways.

Growth Areas

The growth areas element establishes guidelines for promoting when and where growth should occur. It focuses on orderly and fiscally responsible growth that is sensitive to the natural environment and residents' quality of life.

Goal G1:

Promote orderly, timely, and fiscally responsible growth in the State Route 85 Corridor planning area.

Objective G1.1: Encourage timely, orderly, and fiscally responsible growth within the planning area and within mixed use Development Master Plans.

Objective G1.2: Evaluate growth areas to ensure continued feasibility and effectiveness.

Objective G1.3: Maintain cooperation with stakeholders to help ensure that future growth is coordinated in an efficient manner.

Open Space

The open space element describes dedicated and proposed open space and land ownership considerations.



Goal OS1

Maintain existing open space and encourage expansion of open space to address public access, connectivity, education, preservation, buffering, quantity, quality, and diversity.

- Objective OS1.1:** Promote physical and visual public access to open space resources.
- Objective OS1.2:** Establish regional open space connectivity and linkages for both recreation and wildlife purposes.
- Objective OS1.3:** Promote the economic and quality of life benefits of open space.
- Objective OS1.4:** Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas, including mountains and steep slopes; rivers and significant washes; historic, cultural, and archeological resources; view corridors; sensitive desert; and significant wildlife habitat and ecosystems.
- Objective OS1.5:** Encourage appropriate open space between communities and land uses.
- Objective OS1.6:** Improve quantity, quality, and diversity of open space and recreational opportunities.

Water Resources

The water resources element discusses available water supplies, historical and future water demand, and an analysis of water supplies available for future growth.

Goal W1:

Promote development that makes conservative use of renewable water supplies such as effluent, surface water, and Central Arizona Project water when feasible, and that uses groundwater as the primary source only in the absence of renewable sources.

- Objective W1.1:** Encourage protection and enhancement of future renewable water and groundwater supplies within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.
- Objective W1.2:** Ensure adequate facilities are available for the treatment of wastewater and the distribution of effluent in newly developing areas.



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Goal W2

Reduce the impacts of development on water quality and riparian habitat.

Objective W2.1: Promote the protection and preservation of riparian areas within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Cost of Development

The cost of development element describes the means by which public facilities and services associated with new development will be funded. Efforts are directed at ensuring a fiscally responsible budget, efficient use of taxpayer funds, and establishing an equitable sharing of costs associated with future growth and development.

Goal CD1:

Ensure that new development pays its fair and proportional share of the cost of additional public facility and service needs generated by new development.

Objective CD1.1: Develop a method to determine the need for, and assessing costs of, new facilities and services required to serve new development in order to maintain service levels.

Objective CD1.2: Adopt and implement level of service standards for new development to help promote consistency and certainty in the cost sharing process.

Objective CD1.3: Identify and monitor cost sharing programs for potentially adverse impacts.

Agenda for Action

Various long and short-term actions that will assist in plan implementation and involve continued participation by area residents and public and private organizations are identified. A list of actions is included within the plan.